



THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

January 2008

<http://www.sbhumanists.org>

Theodore Drange on Non-Belief

By Andrew Hankin

Nonbelief will be explained by Theodore Drange, Professor of Philosophy. With atheism, secularism, agnosticism, humanism, skepticism and more, there are almost as many variations of nonbelief as there are religious faiths. Ted Drange argues that:

- It is important for atheists to defend and advance their nonexistence of god arguments against agnostics, deists and religious humanists, as well as to those who declare belief in god.
- Atheism is as important a cause as separation of church and state, because it ultimately would achieve both goals together, against theocracy.
- Current widespread reliance on faith and authority in people's thought processes is bad for individuals and bad for society. Being exposed to atheistic arguments would benefit people with regard to their intellects.

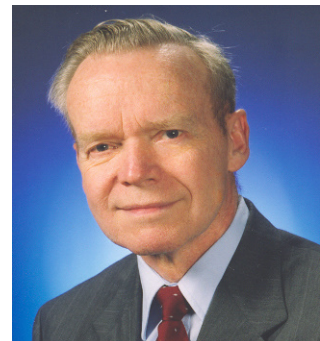
Ted Drange was raised in Brooklyn, NY and was confirmed in the Lutheran church at age 14, in 1948, but became an atheist a year later. He graduated from Brooklyn College in 1955, then attended graduate school at Yale and Cornell Universities, earning a Ph.D in Philosophy in 1963 from Cornell.

Through a long academic career, he taught full time at Brooklyn College, the University of Oregon, Idaho State University and West Virginia University, focusing on philosophy of language and theory of knowledge. Later, his interest shifted to the philosophy of religion; "Nonbelief and Evil" was his second book, published by Prometheus in 1998.

This web page gives summaries and links to several of Ted Drange's writings.
http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/theodore_drange

Theodore Drange, Ph.D
Saturday, January 19th, 2008, 3-5 p.m.
In the Patio Room at Vista de Monte
3775 Modoc Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Join us for socializing at 2:30 p.m.!
The meeting will start promptly at 3 p.m.



Contact Information

Board of Directors 2007-2008

Officers:

President: Adrian Wenner
963-8508 wenner@lifesci.ucsb.edu

Secretary: Hope Smith
967-5143 hsmith1923@aol.com

Treasurer: Richard Martin
687-3563 richardmartin@cox.net

Board Members/At Large:

Dick Cousineau
Andrew Hankin
James Kimberly
Anne Rojas
Marian Shapiro
Ray Stone
Nancy Wahl
Mary Wilk

Committee Chairpersons/Other Contacts

Membership: Mary Wilk
967-3045 mwilk@cox.net

Publicity: Andrew Hankin
965-3739 green_helmet@hotmail.com

Programs: Dick Cousineau
687-2371 dkcgeo@cox.net

Social Action: Marian Shapiro
968-0478 marianshapiro@cox.net

Book Club: Marty Shapiro
968-0478 martinshapiro@cox.net

Activities Director: Anne H. Rojas
564-6086 annehrojas@cox.net

Corresponding Secretary: James Kimberly
564-1991 dr.doboy@gmail.com

Membership Directory: Ray Stone
682-2123 rstone@west.net

Newsletter Editor: Diane Krohn
djkrohn@cox.net

Web Master: Wayne Beckman
569-5503 hssbwebmaster@cox.net

Membership Notes

by Mary Wilk

Humanist Society meetings are usually held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 3 pm in the Patio Room of Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Road, Santa Barbara, CA. More information is available at our web site:

www.SantaBarbaraHumanists.org

or by contacting any of the board members listed in the left-hand column of this page.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter mailed to a friend or someone who might be interested in our Society, please send their contact information to: PO Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, or call Mary Wilk. Alternatively, all of our newsletters are available at the web address shown above.

If you are not already a member, we encourage you to join our Society. Annual membership dues are \$36 for a single person, \$60 for a couple, and \$100 (or more) for a sponsor. Members receive the monthly newsletter and have the option of attending meetings, outings and special events sponsored by the Society.

Those unable to attend our monthly meetings may subscribe to our newsletter for an annual fee of \$20, but are not entitled to other membership privileges. When attending our meetings, a donation of \$2 from members and \$5 from non-members is appreciated. First or second-time visitors are welcome on a complimentary basis. For more information, please contact Mary Wilk or any member of our Society.

News About Members

By Hope Smith
and Andrew Hankin

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

Bruce & Julie Morrow
1011 Rinconada Rd. #A
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
963-7275

George Solinas
130 W. Victoria #17
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
963-6535

Letters to the Editor:

Andrew Hankin, December 5, *Independent*, disapproved of telecommunication antennas atop the new Granada Theatre building, spoiling the city skyline.

John Coppejans, December 10, *News-Press*, would like to see a presidential candidate promise to use reason and commonsense in making important decisions, instead of praying to a power that is not there.

Dick Cousineau and Ray Stone attended the 2007 Conference of the Center for Inquiry/New York City, which took place November 9-11 at the New York Academy of Sciences in downtown Manhattan.

Judy and Rob Egenolf, also Nancy Koppelman (with husband Larry), were supporters of and attended the Human Rights Watch Annual Dinner "Voices for Justice 2007" on November 11. Judy was a co-chair of the Dinner Committee, on which the others also served. Their photos appeared in the Sunday, December 2 *News-Press* feature "On the Town."

On December 16, while Dick Cousineau was at a Quire of Voyces event, his partner Judy Freeman played clarinet in the Prime Time Concert Band annual holiday show in the San Marcos High School Auditorium. The appreciative audience included Andrew Hankin, also Sydney and Hope Smith.

In a December 23 *News-Press* article by staff writer Jeremy Foster on local municipalities and religious symbols, Roger Schlueter, as former chairman of the Santa Barbara Humanist Society, is quoted as saying: "Most of the governments are rather progressive and supportive of church and state separation, and do a good job of keeping explicit religious funding out of county and city-district funding." This was in response to a request from Mr. Foster for the Humanist Society's stance on the possibility of religious symbols in government-sponsored holiday displays.

On Saturday afternoon, December 22, HSSB members Merle Betz, Andrew Hankin, and Dick Cousineau enjoyed classical-style music, presented by the Santa Barbara Music Club. Played marvelously were two solo piano works by Frederic Chopin, followed by three Slavonic dance pieces by Antonin Dvorak, played by two people with four hands on the same piano!

Finally, an acoustic guitarist with female vocalist performed familiar songs with a holiday theme, including their stunning version of "The Rose" (more famously performed on a grand, orchestral scale by Bette Midler).

The Santa Barbara Music Club organizes free concerts every month, on Wednesday mornings and Saturday afternoons. Their website has their 2008 schedule, which is to be recommended and supported as a local treasure:

http://sbmusicclub.org/concert_schedule.html

Notes From the President By Adrian Wenner

The House of Representatives, which can't seem to find a way to get our troops home from Iraq, managed to pass a theocratic-type resolution on the 11th of December, entitled: "Recognizing the importance of Christmas and the Christian faith." The vote was 372 in favor, nine opposed, with 50 others not going on record. The "**Resolved**" portion of that document reads:

"That the House of Representatives —

- *recognizes the Christian faith as one of the great religions of the world;*
- *expresses continued support for Christians in the United States and worldwide;*
- *acknowledges the international religious and historical importance of Christmas and the Christian faith;*
- *acknowledges and supports the role played by Christians and Christianity in the founding of the United States and in the formation of the western civilization;*
- *rejects bigotry and persecution directed against Christians, both in the United States and in the formation of the western civilization;*
- *expresses its deepest respect to American Christians and Christians throughout the world."*

(One can find the full text by accessing **H. Res. 847** on Google.)

Those Representatives, upon assuming office, vowed to uphold the Constitution, including the 1st Amendment statement, "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*" Their passing of this resolution clearly violates an agreed-upon responsibility upon taking office. Although such a resolution is not a binding law, it can

clearly send a chill into the hearts of those in other faiths or those who don't believe in any religion.

In a December 15th press release, **The Council for Secular Humanism** chided Congress for disrespecting other religions: (See [CSH Press Release on H. R#F6ABA](#)) Paul Kurtz, CSH chair, stated, "It is deplorable that in this day and age and in light of violence against religious minorities here in the United States that the Congress would stoke those flames with preferential language in support of a single religion."

If Representatives are serious about their agreed-upon responsibilities, they should immediately pass a series of like resolutions for all other religions and for those who exercise their freedom from organized religion in this country.

Book Club By Marty Shapiro

The next meeting for the Humanist Book Club is set for Wednesday, January 16th, at 1:30 p.m.. The book selection is *Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*, a fascinating detective-style study about Jesus, Saul/Paul, and the creation of Christianity (by Paul?). The author is Hyam Maccoby, a widely-recognized Old Testament scholar.

Excerpt from Amazon.com review:

A strong recommend to anyone interested in history - whether it is regular history or religious history - and a work that MUST be read with an open mind.

When: Wednesday, January 16th, 1:30 p.m.

Where: Art and Elaine Brody's house

1125 Camino del Rio

(off Cathedral Oaks, between Tucker's Grove and Highway 154)

692-8898

brodybiz@cox.net

Scenes from Our Winter Solstice Party

Photos by Marian Shapiro



*From L to R, Top to Bottom:
Vincent Walker, Hope Smith, Sydney Smith, and
Micki Stern.
Wilma Seelye and Ron Kronenberg.
Pat and John Copejans.
Andrew Hankin, Jim Balter, and Ellie Lambrou.
Our special guest speaker, Winston Churchill!!
Josette Barsky and Wayne Beckman.
Hugh and Helen Smart.*

Social Scene

By Anne Rojas

Happy New Year to Everyone!

We finished the year up with a very successful Winter Solstice Party at Sizzler. Marty Shapiro won the "grand prize" of the Sears Gift Certificate. A very special word of thanks to the Barskys and the Coppejans for taking charge in my absence. James Kimberly's program was much enjoyed by all and thanks to him and Andrew Hankin for the fine entertainment.

I plan on more theater/dinner evenings, as the small group who participates seems to enjoy these programs. Please keep me aware of any cultural activities that you think might be enjoyed by our group. (Andrew is always very helpful in this regard.)

This January we are trying a new restaurant for Dining Out after the speaker meeting. We will go to Jake's on De la Vina, located where the old Skandi Buffet used to be located. The new owner seems anxious for our business and agrees to separate checks, a buffet choice of entrée, and other amenities. I will be meeting with him prior to the Dining Out date of January 19th. I will send a separate e-mail with full details and reservation details. An accurate count is needed, as the place is not large.

As always, your help, suggestions, etc. are welcomed.

Remember to come at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday (January 19th) should you care to socialize prior to the 3:00 start time. I will be providing drinks and snacks at no charge. Anyone who wants to bring cookies to future meetings, please contact me.

Upcoming Events

By Dick Cousineau

Our speaker for the **Saturday, February 16th** meeting will be David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. The meeting will be at 3 p.m. in the Patio Room at Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Road, Santa Barbara.

From the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation website: <http://www.wagingpeace.org/>

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation initiates and supports worldwide efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, to strengthen international law and institutions, and to inspire and empower a new generation of peace leaders. Founded in 1982, the Foundation is comprised of individuals and organizations worldwide who realize the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age. The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan international education and advocacy organization. It has consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is recognized by the UN as a Peace Messenger Organization.

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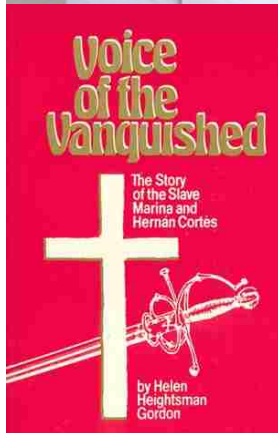
HSSB Bookstore

By Ray Stone

Don't forget about the HSSB bookstore, open for business at our meetings. Books will be both new and used. If you have books of interest to Humanists, and the books are in good condition, please consider donating them to the store. Just bring them to the next meeting, or alternatively, contact Ray at 682-2123.

Santa Barbara Author (and HSSB Member) Wins Award for Historical Fiction

Submitted by Helen Gordon



At the Hollywood Book Festival 2007, Helen Heightsman Gordon earned an award for best book in the category of historical fiction. The contest was judged on the basis of the author's story-telling ability plus the potential for the novel to translate into other media such as a movie or television series.

Her novel, titled *Voice of the Vanquished: The Story of the Slave Marina and Hernan Cortes*, is about authentic historical figures (realistically depicted) who changed the fate of two continents. Marina, one of 20 slaves given to Hernan Cortes by the natives of Tabasco, spoke Mayan as well as her native Nahuatl. She quickly learned Spanish,

became Cortes' interpreter, and enabled him to form alliances with the enemies of Moctezuma II.

After Cortes conquered the Aztecs, Marina bore Cortes a son from a love greater than a master and a slave are ever supposed to know. For the last two centuries she has been demonized as La Malinche the traitress, but Gordon believes she was a courageous woman who should be honored and admired.

About the author:

Dr. Gordon is a semi-retired English professor who enjoys researching and writing. She has published 5 textbooks, many articles in professional journals, 3 chapbooks of poetry and humor, and numerous opinion pieces in newspapers. She was an editor for the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at UCSB, and still does some editing.

In addition to promoting her first historical novel, *Voice of the Vanquished*, she is producing her second edition of a new interpretation of Shakespeare's sonnets, entitled *The Secret Love Story in Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Her next project will be to turn the exciting research she has done for that book into a novel.

Found on the Web

By Ray Stone

Here is a very interesting transcript of a 2006 debate on the subject: "Is There Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus?" The debaters are Dr. Bart Ehrman of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. William Lane Craig of the Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, CA. The transcript can be found at:

<http://www.holycross.edu/departments/crec/website/resurrdebate.htm>

January Birthday: Benjamin Franklin

By Diane Krohn

Benjamin Franklin was born on January 17, 1706. In honor of his birthday, here are some selected quotes from Mr. Franklin:

-They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. (*Historical Review of Pennsylvania*)

-The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason: The Morning Daylight appears plainer when you put out your Candle. (*Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1758)

-If we look back into history for the character of the present sects in Christianity, we shall find few that have not in their turns been persecutors, and complainers of persecution. The primitive Christians thought persecution extremely wrong in the pagans, but practiced it on one another. The first Protestants of the Church of England blamed persecution in the Romish Church, but practiced it upon the Puritans. These found it wrong in the bishops, but fell into the same practice themselves both here and in New England. (*An Essay on Toleration*)



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Santa Barbara
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Santa Barbara, CA 93130